legends, were dependent upon the genius of Heinrich Heine. "In Heine's truly dramatic treatment of the redemption of this Ahasuerus of the Sea/' Wagner had written with reference to the latter, in his *Autobiographical Sketch* of 1843, before his anti-Jewish prejudice had developed, "I found all I wanted to make of the Saga an opera subject. / *came to an understanding in the matter with Heine himself."**

That there is anything Semitic in the compositions of Mozart has never been suggested: though it is a fact that the handful of Jews of London were among the first persons to shew him encouragement, during his visit to England as an infant prodigy in 1764. However, no small part of the enjoyment of the myriads who listen to his operas—particularly *Don Juan* and *The Marriage of Figaro*—comes from the extraordinary ability of his librettist. This was Emanuel Conegliano, of Ceneda in Italy, better known under his baptized name of Lorenzo da Ponte. He rivalled Casanova in his amorous adventures and autobiographical audacity, contributed considerably to the success of the most famous of Mozart's operas, brought the first Italian opera company to America, and closed an eventful life at New York, at a venerable old age, in 1838. Similarly, the libretto of Richard Strauss' *Bosenkavalier* was written by that stylistic genius and Liberal reformer, the half-Jew Hugo von Hoffmannsthal.

§vn

One of the most important strands in the

complex history of the Theatre is, of course, Biblical. The mediaeval Miracle Play, presenting to the people in dramatised form the familiar episodes of Scriptural

[1] It may be added that there is strong ground for suspecting that Wagner himself, for all his anti-Semitism, was half-Jewish by blood, his real father being named Greyer.